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COUNTRY: Hungary

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REPORT NO.:

TOPIC: Tarnira Airfield

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EVALUATION:

DATE OF CONTENT: 5 May 1950 to 21 March 1951

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DATE OBTAINED:

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1. Tapolca (Y 4/D 35) airfield, including the barracks area, covered an area of about 1 x 3 km. (1) The installations at the field were almost completely destroyed during the war. Most of them were reconstructed in 1950. The landing field was about 1 x 2 km. Its soil was so soft that the field was not serviceable in rainy weather although there was a drainage system. The subsoil water occasionally flooded the cellars of some installations. There was no hard surface runway at the field. A concrete taxiway about 70 to 80 x 400 meters extended in front of the two hangars. No installations for night flying were available. (2)
2. Eight semi-underground containers, each about 8 to 9 meters long and 2.5 meters in diameter, were seen in the fuel dump northwest of the field. An air force ammunition depot, located in the woods north of the field, consisted of three barracks buildings for 30 guards, a one-story guard house, seven storage areas, each about 4 meters square, for aircraft ammunition, machine guns, rifles and submachine guns, and a shed, about 6 x 35 meters for the storage of bombs. (3) Bombs, 100 kg and 250 kg in weight, and known as Kesar bomba (sic) were seen there.
3. Aircraft stationed at the field included 24 single-engine two-seater aircraft and 3 trainers. Description of one of the single-engine planes of the Parduc (panther) type is as follows: In-line engine, landing gear retracting rearward, closed cockpit, machine gun for aerial gunner, one aircraft cannon in each wing, and two or three bombs under the fuselage. (4) The trainers were low-wing monoplanes of Fecke (swallow) type, with rigid landing gears, in-line engines, wooden propellers and two-seater cockpits. (5)
4. The headquarters of an air force regiment, [REDACTED] was stationed at the airfield. The commander of the regiment was Captain Ferenc Zsoltai, about 32, 165 cm tall, with fair hair and blue eyes. He had served in the army of the monarchy. His deputy was Captain Szentpeteri (fmu). Lieutenant Paloczat (probably Paloczai) (fmu), belonged to the pilot company. The regiment was organized as follows: An airforce service battalion, an aerial gunners' company of about 60 to 70 men, a pilots' company of about 45 to 50 men, all of whom were officers and members of the Communist Party, and a mechanic's company of about 80 to 90 men. (6)
5. The air force service battalion (Repulsoe kiszolgalo zaszivalyi), organized in

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September 1950, had [redacted] Its commander was Captain Ferenc Szerencses, about 26 years old, stout, 178 cm tall, brown eyes, brown hair, round face, who was a former miner. The battalion was organized into: a staff; signal company, [redacted] motorized company, [redacted] guard company, [redacted] [redacted] and technical company, [redacted]

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- a. Staff. Battalion commander, deputy battalion commander, political officer, officer in charge of the security section, athletic officer, supply platoon officer, officer assigned to the supply platoon, ordnance officer. For some time after his arrival, the officer who was assigned to the supply platoon wore claret service color with the supply troops insignia, crossed ears of corn and hammer. Later he wore white-bordered blue epaulets, the service color of the air force and the supply troops insignia.
- b. Signal company. About 60 to 65 men.
- c. Motorized company. About 60 to 65 men and about 20 civilian employees. About 70 to 80 motor vehicles, including tank trucks; 3 fire trucks; 3 wreckers; repair shop trucks, etc.
- d. Guard company. About 200 to 250 men, charged with guarding the airfield and the ammunition and bomb dumps.
- e. Technical company. This company was organized into a staff, landing observation platoon, ordnance platoon, grading platoon, and motor vehicle platoon.

Staff. Sub-Lieutenant Gyoergy Kendernai, company chief, about 24 years old, 164 cm tall, red hair, oval face, a former shoemaker. In addition a political officer; an officer in charge of the workshops and three NCOs working directly under him; an officer as chief of the bomb and ammunition storage; an NCO in charge of the battery shop, a sergeant major, and two clerks.

Landings observation platoon. An NCO as platoon leader and about 14 to 15 men, charged with observing the landings, i.e. whether the landing plane had its landing gear extended, whether there were no obstacles on the landing strip, etc.

Ordnance platoon. An officer as platoon leader and about 20 men, charged with the maintenance of weapons, and ammunition storage.

Grading platoon. An NCO as platoon leader and about 15 men, charged with repairing trails caused during landings, maintenance of drainage facilities, and grading work on the emergency and dummy airfield. Soldiers of other units who were not working were detailed to the grading platoon.

Motorized platoon. A technical section, battery charging section, compressor section, and fuel and oil section made up this platoon. The technical section had 15 men, charged with the maintenance of aircraft parts and detergents stored in the technical depot. Damaged instruments which could not be repaired by the assembly company were sent to the central aircraft repair shop in Matyasfoeld (Q 48/H 62) which delivered all accessories. The battery charging section charged batteries by means of two chargers. The compressor section was responsible for the starting of aircraft engines. The fuel and oil section supplied aircraft with fuel and oil. The total strength of the motorized platoon was 6 officers, 7 NCOs, and 67 EM. (7)

- 6. Training in the battalion consisted of basic training and instruction aircraft. At least twice a week, alert practices, mostly on the assumption that enemy parachutists attacked the field, were held. Each unit had to occupy an assigned station, e.g., the technical company occupied the technical and fuel depots. Pilots were given daily instructions.

[redacted] the pilots were beginners with little flying experience because the landings were not performed correctly and crashes occurred frequently. About 6 to 7 Parduc type planes of the total of 24 aircraft

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stationed at the field were under repair at all times. Pilots with the first class certificate practiced sharpshooting and bombing near Uj Doeroegd Puszta (Y 4/D 36). There was no formation flying.

7. On 1 March 1951, members of the 1915 and 1916 classes who had been Soviet PWs were inducted into a four-month course. Almost all of them were assigned to the guard company. The inductees were informed by the political officer that they would not be discharged after four months but only upon lessening of the political tension. Almost none of the inductees had served with the old Hungarian Air Force.
8. Brigadier General Hazi Sandor, Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Air Force, and Lieutenant Colonel Namori Sandor, political officer, inspected the field. (8) The former was about 45 years old, 1,68 cm tall, stout, brown eyes, brown hair, and had a large star on his blue-bordered golden epaulets.
9. In August 1950, a parachute unit of about 150 to 200 men was quartered in the barracks installation north of the airfield. (9) This unit practiced parachuting over the airfield. At that time, no aircraft or air force unit, except for an airfield detail of 60 men, was stationed at the field. A twin-engine transport from Budaegers (Q 48/H 12) arrived at the field for parachute practices by the parachute unit. The parachutists were equipped with two parachutes, a back and front-pack parachute; the latter served as a reserve. In early September, the parachute unit was transferred to Kaposvar (Y 4/A 95) where it was still stationed in January 1951, according to a member of the unit. (10)
10. An AA unit of 27 men was also stationed at the field and quartered in the barracks building of the technical company. The unit was allegedly assigned to an AA unit in Keszthely (Y 4/V 40). The unit was equipped with two light and two heavy AA guns.
11. In the fall of 1950, a dummy airfield was established in a meadow just south of Raposka (Y 4/D 35) west of Szent Gyoergy Hegy (Y 4/D 35). Dummy aircraft are to be set up there in case of war. An alternate airfield, about 500 to 600 x 900 meters, was constructed in a T-shaped clearing north-north-west of Doeroegd psz (Y 4/D 36). (10)

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- (1) For location sketch of airfield, see Annex 1.
- (2) For layout sketch of installations at airfield, see Annex 2. The information is believed to be correct. According to a previous report, reconstruction work started in the spring of 1949.
- (3) For details of ammunition dump, see Annex 3.
- (4) The plane is an IL-10, called Parduc in Hungary.
- (5) Possibly a UT-2.
- (6) A regular ground attack regiment is probably stationed there. The Hungarian Air Force is said to be equipped with about 50 IL-10s assigned to ground attack units.
- (7) This is the first information on an air force service battalion and its organization. It is not known whether the central aircraft repair shop, which has not been confirmed, is still located in Matyasfoeld.
- (8) Brigadier General Sandor is reported for the first time as commander-in-chief of the Hungarian Air Force. Barnabas Horvath, Lieutenant Colonel of General Staff, was reported in this position in 1949, and Colonel Zalka, a confirmed Communist, in late 1950. It is possible that Sandor held this position in the intervening time.
- (9) This information is confirmed [] according to whom the parachute company of the 25th Rifle Regt was stationed there in May 1950 and a regular parachute unit with white-bordered green epaulets in December 1950.

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(10) This information is received for the first time. For location sketch of alternate airfield, see Annex 4.

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